

# Barium Meal and Follow Through

## Patient Information

Radiology Department



The Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website is available on the link: <https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets> or scan the QR code.

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**Our Values**

People at  
the Heart

Listen and  
Involve

Kind and  
Respectful

One  
Team

## Introduction

It is very important that you take the time to read this **entire** leaflet, as it contains important information and instructions essential for your examination to be performed successfully.

## What is a barium follow through?

A barium follow through is a special X-Ray study of the small bowel. The bowel does not show up very well on ordinary X-Ray pictures, therefore we will ask you to drink a white chalky liquid called “barium” to highlight the bowel, enabling us to produce clearer pictures.

## Am I required to fast?

Yes.

**Please do not eat or drink anything from midnight the night before your examination.**

## Important Information

If any of the following apply to you, please contact the X-Ray department:

- Have you had a bowel biopsy within one week of your appointment date?
- Are you or might you be pregnant?

**If you are aged between 12 – 55 years then you will be asked to complete a pregnancy questionnaire, including the date of your last period.**

**If you had your last period more than 28 days before the appointment date; please ring the x-ray department for advice on 01942 822398.**

## When you arrive at the hospital

Please follow the directions to the Radiology or X-Ray Department and report to the reception desk.

You will be shown to a private cubicle and given a gown to put on. You will be able to place your personal items in a basket that you will keep with you. If you want to bring your own dressing gown to wear over the top, that is fine.

## What happens during the examination?

You will be taken into the X-Ray room and introduced to the Practitioner Radiographer / Consultant Radiologist.

You will be asked to drink some “barium” (white chalky liquid). A series of X-Ray pictures of your abdomen will be taken at timed intervals, with you either lying on your front or back.

You will be asked to sit outside the X-Ray room in between each picture and given another cup full of barium to drink.

Once the barium has reached the end of your small bowel, it will be necessary to take some more pictures whilst pressing on your abdomen in certain areas. This is to ensure that your entire small bowel has all been visualised.

Once the examination is complete, you are free to leave the department.

### **How long will it take?**

**This test can take a long time.** Everybody's bowel works differently, some slower or quicker than others, so be aware that you may be in the X-Ray department 2-3 hours, sometimes longer. (It may be a good idea to bring a good book or magazine to read).

### **Are there any risks or side effects?**

Your stools may appear whiter in colour and may remain discoloured for the next day or two.

You are advised to eat a good high fibre diet including plenty of fruit and vegetables, and we do ask that you drink plenty of fluids (water, tea or fruit juice) for the next two days to ensure that you do not become constipated from the barium.

After the procedure, you will be given an aftercare information leaflet to take home with you.

### **When will I get the results?**

The report will be sent to your consultant for your next clinic appointment, or if your General Practitioner (GP) referred you for the test, they should have the results in around 14 days.

## **Frequently asked questions**

### **Can I take my medication?**

Yes, with a small amount of water.

### **Can I eat and drink?**

**No, it is very important that you do not eat or drink anything from midnight the night before your examination.**

### **Information for diabetic patients**

We do try to book diabetic patients first thing onto a morning list to reduce the time you need to fast. It is probably a good idea to bring a sandwich and drink with you to have after your examination is complete.

If you begin to feel ill whilst fasting, you can have a few sips of a sugar glucose drink. If you would like further advice, you can ring the X-Ray Department on **01942 822398**.

### **Where can I park my car?**

You can park your car on the main RAEI hospital site and there is a charge, so bring some change with you.

We now have another car park available to patients on Freckleton Street, and there is a short walk (0.2 miles) up to the hospital from here.

The following people are eligible to receive free parking at our hospitals:

1. Disabled people holding a valid Blue Badge, to be displayed in windscreen of vehicle.
2. Frequent outpatient attendees, defined as those who are required to attend hospital for an appointment at least three times within a month for at least three months.
3. Parents or guardians of sick children staying overnight in the hospital.

Outpatients and parents / guardians outlined in points two and three need to request an exemption pass from the relevant ward manager or the security office and display this in their vehicle for the duration of their stay.

### **Ambulance Transport**

If it is necessary for you to have ambulance transport and you live in the Wigan Borough, please telephone **0300 0707 0737** to arrange it. Please inform the ambulance depot that it is for a special X-Ray, and it is essential that you arrive on time.

If you do not live in the Wigan Borough, please contact your GP to arrange your ambulance transport.

### **Further Information**

If you have any queries regarding the examination, or suggestions on how we may improve any aspect of our service, please do not hesitate to speak to us either on the day of the examination or contact us on 01942 822398 (Monday to Friday 9am until 5pm).

Please use this space to write notes or reminders.

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## Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

## Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager  
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary  
Wigan Lane  
Wigan  
WN1 2NN

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## Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



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## How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request. For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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